

The French Chambers of Agriculture

Public institutions representing the farmers and the rural world

The French Chambers of Agriculture were founded in 1924 and their national umbrella organization, the Permanent Assembly of Chambers of Agriculture (APCA), was founded in 1935.

They are **self-governing public bodies**, managed by elected representatives from the agriculture and forestry sectors. Their role is on the one hand to **represent the farmers and foresters** to local and national authorities, and on the other hand to **offer a broad range of services** to farmers, foresters and other rural stakeholders. The Chambers' elections are organized every 6 years and the last elections took place between January and March 2013.

The French Chambers of Agriculture work as a decentralized network comprising 88 Chambers of Agriculture at district level ("département"), 21 regional Chambers of Agriculture, the APCA and the academic institute ESITPA. The Chambers have 4 200 elected members and about 8 000 permanent staff, among which 175 staff employed by APCA.

Institutions involved in all agricultural sectors and in the rural development

The Chambers of Agriculture are **involved in nearly all agricultural sectors**: plant and animal production; agricultural economics; farm management and strategy; local food products (production, processing and marketing); rural development and local planning; environment and management of natural resources; agricultural and rural policies. In these various sectors, their activities include information, advice, training, experimentation and demonstration, supporting groups of farmers (~1800 permanent groups), follow-up of "reference farms" (~3000), expertise and studies, project co-ordination, and communication.

Concerning research and development, the Chambers manage or are involved in about **50 experimental stations** (fruit and vegetables, arable crops, livestock production, organic farming) throughout France and implement numerous **on-farm trials and demonstrations** mostly in connection with farmers' groups.

Furthermore, they are involved in **several thematic R&D networks** ("RMT" and "GIS") and their institute ESITPA carries out **research activities both on soil quality and function, and agro-materials**.

The APCA plays a role of expertise, representation, communication and **network co-ordination** at national and European level. It also manages various common services for all French Chambers of Agriculture: information systems (SIRCA), a web-based platform dedicated to agri-tourism and local products ("Bienvenue à la Ferme"), a training centre for agricultural advisers ("Resolia"), ...

Institutions involved in European and international networks

The French Chambers of Agriculture also have a sound experience in **European and international networking and co-operation**:

They are **member of the COPA-COGECA** (European farmers' association), **member of the IALB** (International Academy of Rural Advisors), **member of EUFRAS** (European Forum for Agricultural and Rural Advisory Services) and belong to an informal **network of fourteen European Chambers of Agriculture**.

Furthermore, they are involved in several European projects (especially in the framework of the programmes ERASMUS, INTERREG, FP7 and HORIZON 2020), in **bilateral cooperation projects** (for example recently in Croatia and Romania), as well as in **European twinning and technical assistance projects** in the Balkans and in the Mediterranean area, especially in the framework of ADECIA (French agency for international cooperation in agriculture, food and rural development).

President of APCA: Mr Guy Vasseur

Director of APCA: Mr Regis Dubourg

Contact: sylvain.sturel@apca.chambagri.fr

More information on Internet: www.chambres-agriculture.fr

Last update: 5th December 2014